

Rhode Island Statewide Planning Program

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Quarterly Progress Report

Technology Transfer Center to go to URI

For the thirteen years from its inception in January 1991, the Rhode Island Technology Transfer Center (RI T2) has been a part of the Statewide Planning Program. It was placed here because Statewide Planning was seen as the best location to serve all thirty-nine cities and towns and their public works departments, and the state as a whole. But, as a result of staff attrition, it is about to be transferred.

While the precise date for transfer is not yet certain, in the next few months the new home of the Rhode Island LTAP program will be the University of Rhode Island Transportation Center at Kingston. The Transportation Center may be found on the web at <http://www.uritc.uri.edu/> or by phone at (401) 874-7075. The programs and services offered during the thirteen years the center has been at Statewide Planning are expected to be continued by URI.

The RI T2 Center is one of 57 Centers in the Federal Highway Administration's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) family. LTAP is a national effort designed to improve access to highway, road and street technology for local governments and is often thought of as a transportation extension service. The goal and purpose of LTAP, and that of the RI T2 Center, is to spread transportation technology and innovation to rural and small urban governments. This is critical to Rhode Island communities. Of the 6,055 miles of functionally classified roads in the state, 4,211 miles, some 69.5 percent, are classified as local and are the responsibility of the local communities.

In order to serve local public works agencies, the RI T2 Center has conducted on average 43 workshops a year featuring over 140 different workshop topics at no cost to the communities. These workshops have reached over 20,000 individuals in most of the 39 municipalities. Program offerings are designed to enhance the entire array of public works functions ranging from equipment operation to office work, from laborers to supervisors. Most hands-on workshops such as welding for instance, require limits on class size to facilitate participation.

These are offered several times a year at local facilities in order to reach the widest possible audience. Classroom based workshops are offered at central locations and open to larger audiences. T2 also subsidized computer software courses offered by the Department of Administration's Office of Training and Development for office staff and hosted a number of downlink sites for satellite broadcasts of interest to public works employees, including the new Manual of Uniform Transportation Control Devices (MUTCD) and National Pollution Discharge Elimination (NPDES) best practices. Workshops were updated as new information or new technologies came on line and often repeated to impart better ways of doing business. While T2 offers a wide range of workshop subjects, the focus of most programs is safety: safety in work zones, safety in shop operations, safety while operating equipment.

The RI T2 Center also serves as a clearinghouse for published information. The center has a lending library of publications, periodicals, instructional videos, and CDs. It alerts its community of interest via a quarterly newsletter, *LINKS & NODES*, which contains articles on subjects such as work zone safety, shop safety, sign maintenance, supervision, road maintenance, and tools and equipment that other public works departments had devised and found useful. It features a web site with links to other transportation and related agencies, notes upcoming workshops, conferences and meetings, and has a request form for readers to request the loan of publications and videos.

Some T2 information is directed toward specific audiences within the public works community. These include Road Pac, a library of information tailored to public works directors; and a clearinghouse of municipal information on job specifications, material specifications, and equipment specifications.



Committee Actions

STATE PLANNING COUNCIL

The Council met in April and June. They received briefings on the preliminary state population projections. The Council took the following actions

- Adopted an amendment procedure for the Transportation Improvement Program
- Amended the Transportation Improvement Program
- Adopted the FFY 2004 Project Priority List of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
- Adopted the FY 2004 Statewide Planning Work Program and the Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

The Committee met in April, May and June. The Committee received briefings on the the Airport Systems Plan, preliminary state population projections, the update of the State Land Use Policies and Plan and a handbook on the State Guide Plan. The Committee took the following actions:

- Adopted the functional classification of Rhode Island's roads based upon the 2000 Census.
- Recommended Council approval of the FY 2004 Work Program and Unified Work Program for Transportation Planning.
- Recommended approval of the FFY 2004 Project Priority List of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

GROWTH PLANNING COUNCIL

The Governor's Growth Planning Council is charged with examining the impacts of the state's current development patterns, evaluating the effect of state programs on sustainable development, recommending means to encourage sustainable development and fostering partnerships to build local capacity to manage growth. Statewide Planning is providing staff support to the Council.

At the Council's June quarterly meeting, a subcommittee working on the issue of abandoned property reported its findings and recommendations. The report concludes that abandoned property is a significant problem, particularly in urban areas.

Rhode Island law offers opportunity to work with abandoned property but local officials require training and how-to manuals to help them deal with the problem. Geographic information systems offer opportunity to manage and prevent this problem.

The Council also took up the issue of affordable housing. A coalition of housing interests requested that the Council urge the Governor to appoint a special commission to study and report back to the Council and the Governor. The Council decided to appoint an executive committee to begin the process of scoping the issues.

At the September meeting the Council will be briefed on the South County Greenspace Project.

Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Approved the Amendment to the Transit Program of RIPTA in the FFY 2003 – 2004 TIP. The Agreement will be brought back to the State Planning Council for their approval.

Endorsed the FY '04 Unified Work Program.

Transportation

TRAVEL CORRIDOR PLANNING INITIATIVE

Excellent progress has been made on the Travel Corridor Planning Initiative. The workshop phase of this project is complete. Seven travel corridors of statewide significance have been identified. These corridors represent a general direction of travel and consist of parallel roadways and other transportation facilities. All but one of the corridors crosses over into Massachusetts or Connecticut.

For 6 of the 7 corridors (excluding Interstate 95), the following steps have been completed:

CORRIDOR PROFILES

data collection

Organized by route to show change over distance

Transportation facilities and modes (incl. TIP projects, sidewalks, bike lanes, transit routes, etc.)

Traffic counts and ridership data

Accident data

Census data, population growth

Local comprehensive plans

Land cover and future land use maps

PLANNER WORKSHOPS

information gathering

Study area boundaries

Identify

- users/functions of corridor (i.e., freight, tourist, commuter)
- major nodes/ intersections
- major traffic generators
- major developments (in approval process or under construction)
- “at-risk” areas (e.g., open space zoned for development, vacant commercial property, abandoned lots)
- assets/areas to protect (e.g., residential neighborhoods, open space)
- data collection needs

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

visioning

Present map with features identified by planners

Identify and prioritize issues (may include the following)

- traffic/congestion
- transit
- environmental
- growth/sprawl/land use
- community character
- safety
- pedestrian
- bicycle
- freight

Develop vision

- vision statement
- goals for corridor
- potential growth centers

The RI Department of Transportation and the RI Public Transit Authority have both been active participants and very supportive of the project. The input provided by local planning officials and the public has been outstanding. Combined attendance at the 7 public workshops, which were facilitated by Barbara Sokoloff and Associates, was over 100 people. Thirty of the 39 cities and towns were represented either at a planner workshop, a public workshop, or through written comments. Additionally, representatives from southeastern Massachusetts, central Massachusetts (Blackstone Valley), Land Connecticut DOT provided their expertise.

Local planners were extremely helpful in identifying traffic generators, major developments, and other places of interest. This information was plotted on various maps, and is important in understanding who uses the corridor and how the corridor functions. At the public workshops, attendees were given the opportunity to plot their place of residence and place of work on aerial photographs of the study area. They were also asked to identify what they felt were the most important issues in their corridor by placing sticker dots on the flip chart. The preliminary results are as follows:



Transportation

MOST IMPORTANT LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES

Travel Corridor	First Place	Second Place	Third Place (more than one entry indicates a tie)
East West	traffic congestion	community character	environmental
South County	growth/sprawl	community character	traffic congestion
Aquidneck Island	traffic congestion (including access management)	growth/sprawl	transit environment community character
East Bay	transit	traffic congestion	bicycle pedestrian
West Bay	community character	growth/sprawl	traffic congestion transit
Blackstone Valley	transit	traffic congestion	growth/sprawl community character

While there are some similarities, there is also enough diversity in the responses to indicate that there is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to corridor planning. Issues that do not appear in the top three, but that registered some degree of concern, include safety and freight movement.

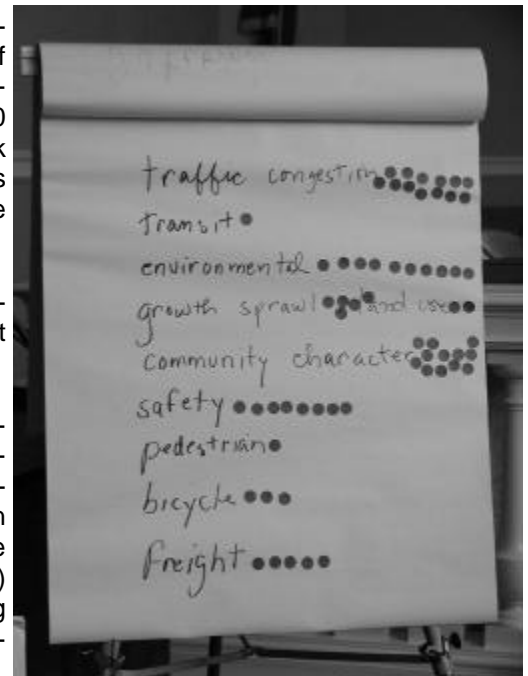
The Interstate Corridor, which includes I-195 and I-295, as well as Routes 10, and 4, were studied somewhat differently. Because the study area is so large, it was decided to forego the planner workshop in favor of a discussion at the July meeting of the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC), to which local officials and the public were invited to attend.

Results of the Corridor Planning Initiative and visions for each corridors will be documented in a Technical Paper later this year. Please visit: <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/corridor.htm>

Highway Functional Classification: The Highway Functional Classification has been updated jointly by Statewide Planning and the Department of Transportation and submitted to the Federal Highway Administration for approval. Changes are based on the revised Urban Boundary (from 2000 Census data), changes in the road network, and comments received back from cities and towns. The Highway Functional Classification determines which roadways are eligible to receive federal funding. The map can be viewed at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/transportation/Func.pdf>

TIP Amendment: The FY 2003-2004 Transportation Improvement Program was amended to reflect changes in transit funding. The amendment can be viewed at <http://www.planning.ri.gov/tip/amend2.pdf>

FTA/NEPTA Conference: The annual conference of the Northeast Passenger Transportation Association was held at the Westin Hotel in Providence in May. At the request of the Federal Transit Administration, Statewide Planning participated in a panel discussion covering two areas in which we may serve as a model to other planning agencies: 1) How Rhode Island links statewide planning with local comprehensive planning, and 2) how TIP projects are selected. In a related matter, Statewide Planning submitted Title VI compliance documentation to FTA to ensure our continued eligibility for transit planning grants.



Local Comprehensive Plans

Accepted for State review the Five-Year Updates of the local comprehensive plans for the municipalities of Bristol, Jamestown, Middletown, Newport.

Accepted for State review a comprehensive plan amendment (CUM 03-01) from the Town of Cumberland. The amendment involved a major revision of the Town's Housing Element.

Processed a Request for Comprehensive Planning Grant retainage funds from the City of Providence.

Met with the Town Planner and the Town's Planning Consultant for West Warwick in order to reach an understanding as to which items still required attention before their Comprehensive Plan could be granted State approval. A second meeting was held to assess their progress.

Reviewed revisions to the Little Compton Comprehensive Plan. Met with the Planning Board Chairman and their Planning Consultant to discuss the findings. Received a second set of revisions based upon the prior discussion.

Met with the Town Planner of Hopkington to finalize the necessary revisions for State approval of the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

Land Use

The Land Use staff has resumed work on the State Land Use Plan update and, on June 6th, they reported their findings on existing conditions and trends to the Technical Committee, which is serving as the advisory committee for the project.

The State Land Use Plan is the major framework plan connecting Rhode Island's state and municipal system of State Guide Plans and Community Comprehensive Plans. This is Rhode Island's third State Land Use Plan since 1975 and its purpose is to guide all publicly-funded land use in Rhode Island, conservation and development, over the next 20 years. The project comes at a time when the issues of community design, growth management, natural resource protection and social equity have never been more urgent.

This will be first State Guide Plan for Land Use using the Comprehensive Community Plans and the RIGIS system. Themes will include promoting concentrated growth, regional planning, revitalization of older areas, property tax reform and the ability of the State to exercise a role in significant projects of regional or statewide impact.

The renewed efforts on this plan build on the considerable research and public outreach of our staff in recent years. Among our resources are comprehensive land use/land cover mapping, the

Community Comprehensive Plans and municipal zoning ordinances. In the past several years, staff has summarized research findings, including statistics and trends on population and development in a series of technical papers.

With the University of Rhode Island, we conducted a public survey and held a televised town meeting, *Rhode Island Growth Priorities for 2000 and Beyond*. Staff also held a series of five regional workshops with local planners and officials to discuss the major land use issues facing their communities.

Statewide Planning is working with the staffs of other agencies and organizations to assemble the best and most recent data on land use in Rhode Island for use in this project. We are counting on the Technical Committee members to help by adding their expertise in terms of adding data or directing us to information sources for our research base.

RI Census

Journey to Work

Statewide Planning is currently preparing a Technical Paper to present 2000 census data about the travel characteristics of workers in Rhode Island. A summary examination of worker flow data reveals that fewer people live and work in the same community than did in 1990. The major metropolitan

cities of Providence, Pawtucket, Central Falls, and Woonsocket all recorded decreases of approximately 9 percentage points over the last decade of the twentieth century. With the exception of Central Falls, people who reside and work in the same community comprise the largest



Logo of the United States Census 2000

single group of workers in the other three metropolitan cities. The largest single group of workers from Central Falls works in Pawtucket, and the single largest percentage of workers from ten communities works in the City of Providence, including fifty percent of the working population of Providence who live and work in the capitol city.

Economic Development

In May the Economic Development Section staff received 30 proposals from its Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project solicitation. Eligible applicants were Rhode Island cities and towns, public agencies, academic institutions, and private non-profit development organizations. Those proposals that scored at or above the median (this year, 100 out of a possible 200 points) were placed on the CEDS Priority Project List. Such listing made them candidates for endorsement by the three units of the state CEDS Committee: the CEDS Subcommittee, the Technical Committee, and the State Planning Council. Following their approval, the Priority Project List was sent to the regional office of the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). It will also be made part of the CEDS *Annual Report*, which is also submitted to the EDA. Endorsed were 14 construction projects

and three planning or technical assistance projects.

In June, the staff received an additional proposal for the 2003 CEDS List from the Providence Performing Arts Center for facility improvements. This project will be submitted as an amendment to the CEDS at the August meetings of the Technical Committee and State Planning Council.

Also in June, Tyrone Beach of the regional EDA office made several site visits around the state with Economic Development Section staff to discuss EDA projects pending and already underway. Communities visited included Portsmouth, Middletown, Newport, Providence, East Providence, Pawtucket, and Cranston. Mr. Beach also met with people from the following organizations: the Aquidneck Island Planning Commission, the West Elmwood Housing Development Corporation, the

South Providence Development Corporation, the Providence Performing Arts Center, the Pawtucket Armory Association, and the R.I. Economic Development Corporation.

Also within the reporting period, Rhode Island's representative on the Outer Continental Shelf Policy Committee, Bruce Vild of the Economic Development Section staff, delivered the draft report of a subcommittee he chaired addressing issues of education and outreach in the federal offshore oil and gas development program. Comments from other Policy Committee members were due at the end of June. The report will be finalized next quarter and submitted for approval by the Policy Committee at its fall meeting.

Review of EDC projects

- 1 proposals pending from last quarter
- 2 proposals received this quarter
- 2 proposals acted on by staff and reviewing agencies

Rhode Island Geographic Information System



The final indexing and production of digital images for the 1992 series of aerial photography was completed with the assistance of a student intern from Rhode Island College. This year group of over 900 photo images is now available on four CDROM products from the RIGIS Coordinator, and over the Internet from the University of Rhode Island at www.edc.uri.edu/rigis. With the completion of the 1992 series, the first phase of a project to create digital copies of the entire set of historic photography at Statewide Planning has been met. We now have digital products for 6-year groups (1939,1951,1962,1972,1981, & 1992) available to the public. The automation of remaining photography will proceed on a time available basis.

A first draft of a document entitled "RIGIS Guidelines and Standards for Digital Parcel Data Sets for Use in a GIS" was completed and reviewed by selected individuals at organizations with interests in GIS and fields related to municipal parcel maps and land records systems. It will be

offered this summer to a wider audience for further comment and input. When completed it will be adopted by the RIGIS Executive Committee. The document is intended to offer guidance to cities and towns in digitizing existing parcel or assessor's maps for use in a municipal geographic information system. It will also list elements to be considered standards when entering into cooperative projects with or seeking funding from state agencies.

The RIGIS Executive Committee held a quarterly meeting in June. Items discussed included an overview of preparations for the annual Northeast Arc Users Conference to be hosted by Rhode Island in November of 2003. A review of the proposed digital parcel data guidelines was conducted. A discussion on providing technical assistance to the emergency management community resulted in a letter of support submitted to the Director of the RI Emergency Management Agency. Possible changes in the format of both vector and raster digital data offered to the public through the RIGIS data distribution system were discussed.

The RIGIS coordinator worked with the Urban and Regional Information System Association (URISA) and the Northeast Arc Users Group in preparation for conferences on GIS to be held in Rhode Island in August and November of this year.

Continuing GIS analysis and mapping support was provided to the Land Use Section and the Transportation section of Statewide Planning. The Transportation Section used RIGIS data and maps at workshops on transportation corridors. The Land Use section will be updating the state's land use plan and using GIS for both analysis of changes and illustrative proposes.

The RIDOT/RIGIS project to obtain new (spring of 2003) orthophotography for the state is preceding with the completion of aerial photography in April. The product consisting of digital orthophotos of the state is expected to delivered to RIDOT late this fall and be available to the public through the RIGIS data distribution system this winter.

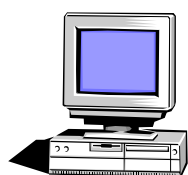
During the reporting period, the RIGIS Coordinator provided support to the RI Economic Development Corporation, The RI Emergency Management Agency, the RI Public Transit Authority, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and several Rhode Island cities and towns.

GRAPHICS

During the months of April, May and June 160 aerial photographs and/or maps were loaned to 40 state agencies, local governments, and private parties.

Graphics work was provided to the Division of Personnel, the Office of Municipal Affairs, The Building Commissioner's Office and the Office of Library Services.

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WEB SITE UPDATE

(<http://www.planning.state.ri.us>)

Work on the Statewide Planning Program's website this quarter included:

- posting of the Newport, Jamestown and Middletown Comprehensive Plans for Review.
- posting of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2002-2004 amendments.
- posting of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Project Description Updates.
- The above listed files are Adobe Acrobat PDF files. A link to the Adobe website is provided for free download of the Acrobat reader.
- posting of State Planning Council, Technical Committee, Children's Cabinet, Rivers Council and Growth Planning Council, Transportation Advisory Committee Agendas.
- posting upcoming public hearings and notices.
- posting of monthly newsletter.
- posting of quarterly report

Web support was also provided to the Information Resource Management Board web site.

For information on the Statewide Planning Program's website contact Kim A. Gelfuso at (401) 222-5764, kimgo@lori.state.ri.us

STAFF NEWS

T2/LTAP Program: **Walter Slocumb** of Statewide Planning directed the Program for 10 years and was recognized for his achievements by the URI Transportation Center at the annual Transportation Week breakfast.

Sally Johnson, Policy Analyst, has been assigned to the Governor's "*Fiscal Fitness*" project.
